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CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE OPERATIONAL LEADER

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract of

Civil-Military Relations and the Operational Leader

The United States Armed Forces stand ready to support national interests by translating policy into military action. That this military action remains subordinate to national policy is generally accepted as an article of faith. Accurate translation of stated and implied policy, then, is of paramount importance. The primary vehicle for this translation is the pattern of civil-military relations a nation forms. Nations which develop an effective relationship enjoy tremendous advantage at both the strategic and operational levels. The pursuit of proper relations, however, has received scant attention at the operational level. Focus has remained, for too long, at the strategic level. History has shown, however, that operational leaders—specifically Unified Commander-in-Chiefs—have tremendous influence in the shaping of civil-military relations. How they choose to fulfill their representative, advisory, and executive responsibilities to the state often becomes the pivotal factor in whether the state enjoys an advantage in the pursuit of military security or the squandering of opportunities.

“Nations which develop a properly balanced pattern of civil-military relations have a great advantage in the search for security...Nations which fail to develop a balanced pattern of civil-military relations squander their resources and run uncalculated risks.”¹

Each time civilian individuals or agencies interface with their military, a nation's pattern of civil-military relations evolves. This developmental process refines the nation's ability to coordinate military power with other forms of national power in execution of a chosen course of action. The Vietnam war dramatically altered the way the United States approaches this relationship. In Vietnam, a dysfunctional relationship emerged between the military and their civilian masters. Centralized execution, political micro-management, fear of providing controversial military advice, and bureaucratic power struggles highlight this dysfunction and led to the squandering of U.S. resources. One benefit of the experience, however, is that a renewed emphasis emerged on developing better civil-military relations. The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 is one example of this benefit. In streamlining the U.S. command structure and communication system, it attempted to force civil-military relations to become more potent.

This renewed emphasis found a home at the strategic, policy making level. Unfortunately, at the operational level—where policy is actually translated into military action—civil-military relations remain like the weather: everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything to change it. In practice, the operational level of war links the strategic and tactical levels. As such, it enjoys a symbiotic relationship with civil-military relations. While civil-military relations serve as the conduit synching operations with policy, operations provide an environment that facilitates a more effective relationship. This, in turn, leads to military security. Unified Commander-in-Chiefs (CINCs), responsible for executing policy at the operational level, have an enormous impact on civil-military relations. Their action and/or inaction often prove to be deciding factors on whether the United States enjoys a great advantage in the search for military security or suffers from the squandering of resources.

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1957), 2.

IDEAL CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

“Previously the primary question was: what pattern of civil-military relations is most compatible with American liberal democratic values? Now this has been supplanted by the more important issue: what pattern of civil-military relations will best maintain the security of the American nation?”²

The primacy of policy. States use various means in the pursuit of national interests. Economic, diplomatic, and informational pressures may be applied in varying degree to force adversaries and allies to behave in a more accommodating way. The state may also resort to violence to accomplish her objectives. This is formally acknowledged in Joint Pub 1. “When the United States undertakes military operations, the Armed Forces of the United States are only one component of a national-level effort involving the various instruments of national power: economic, diplomatic, informational, and military.”³ It becomes the political leader’s obligation to set policy and coordinate these instruments of national power. Each instrument is subordinate to that policy.

Clausewitz threw the full weight of his credibility toward the advancement of this thesis. It is recurrent in *On War* and provides the foundation upon which he builds his theories. Perhaps more widely quoted than any other Clausewitz passage, “war is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means”⁴ avers the supremacy of politics over war. Political leaders, therefore, must accept the responsibility of determining political aims and the proper combination of effort necessary to achieve them. Julian Corbett took this principle one step further. In *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, he argued that the military must thoroughly understand the nation’s political aims and design their war efforts accordingly.⁵ Corbett infers that well-conceived political aims are impotent without communication between political and military

² Ibid. 3.

³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States, Joint Pub 1 (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995), III-11.

⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, On War ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1976), 69.

⁵ Julian S. Corbett, Some Principles of Maritime Strategy (London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1911), 24-25.

authorities. Ideally, this communication will lead to a shared vision. In reality, differences between military and political perspectives are often pronounced. In this case, the possibility of needless bloodshed obliges the military leader to make known the consequences of a given state policy, while the seriousness of the situation obliges the civilian leadership to weigh his advice. “All armies have opinions, and to neglect these is to run the danger of blunting their effectiveness.”⁶

The Operational Leader’s Responsibility. American military leaders generally accept primacy of policy as an article of faith. War Colleges dedicate entire semesters to the principle. Professional military journals and published doctrines embrace it: “The single most important thought to understand about our theory is that war *must serve policy*.”⁷ This acceptance, however, generally focuses at the strategic level. At the operational level, leaders schooled in the importance of de-centralized execution often balk at mid-course correction from civilian leadership. This demurral becomes especially pronounced when the correction is perceived to be motivated more by political than military concerns. A change in focus is required.

It is the operational leader’s responsibility to translate policy into military action. Civil-military relations provide the framework around which this translation occurs. As such, a CINC should be very concerned that the United States maintains a proper pattern of civil-military relations. Without it, military action risks losing sight of the very reason for its initiation. A CINC’s actions taken in theater significantly affect this framework. Each plan developed—each maneuver directed—shapes the relationship between military forces and their civilian leadership. While many players participate in the molding of civil-military relations, acceptance of the primacy of policy leads to the natural conclusion that the military leader bears a disproportionate burden in this shaping. CINCs should thus add to their list of responsibilities the preservation of an effective pattern of civil-military relations. Each Course of Action should be carefully analyzed as to potential impact. While this, at times, may seem an unnecessary burden in the

⁶ Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army: 1640–1945 (London: Oxford University Press 1955), 191.

⁷ U.S. Marine Corps, Warfighting, FMFM 1 (Washington: 1989), 19. [Emphasis in the original].

development and execution of war plans, it is also a tremendous opportunity. Proper civil-military relations facilitate the winning of wars. Operational leaders, more than anyone, shape these relations and, as such, have an effective force multiplying tool at their disposal.

In developing a war plan that will "conflict as little as possible with the political condition from which the war springs,"⁸ trade-offs between political and military considerations are sure to cause tension. Each victory or defeat in the field agitates the political environment. The most sensible military maneuver may lead to unwelcome political ramifications. The CINC, ever sensitive to this possibility, must seek to preserve proper civil-military relations by acknowledging that guidance from civilian authority—even guidance contrary to the transcendent military solution—is inevitable. This guidance should not go unchallenged, however, if it elevates risk to American or coalition forces; nor must it go unchallenged if it hinders the pursuit of operational objectives. Each military risk must be thoroughly understood by the political leadership. The decision properly rests with the National Command Authorities (NCA)—the burden of identifying risks with the CINC. The internal struggle inevitable to this type of civilian-military interface is not, by definition, counter-productive. The necessary polemic that follows may become a healthy component in the rational decision making process if two principles remain—(1) a mechanism to coordinate strategic planning and foreign policy is in place to determine what falls under the political leader's purview and what remains an operational military function, and (2) the overarching maxim that war remains subordinate to policy is not violated. The CINC is obliged to enter this debate. He is equally obliged to accept the final decisions of statesmen.

The professional military leader shoulders a three-fold responsibility to the state.⁹ He must first serve in a *representative* role. A CINC commands numerous civilian and military personnel and is responsible for large geographic areas. He has a right and a duty to convey to the political leadership his assessment of minimum requirements necessary to insure the military security of each. This assessment, shaped around the local political, economic and military

⁸ Corbett, 24.

environment, includes recommendations. Additionally, he has the responsibility to serve as an *advisor*. He should analyze and report, from a military perspective, on implications of alternative courses of state action. He must be perspicacious enough to know when the state is contemplating something that the military cannot effectively deliver. He must then be persuasive in delivering alternatives. How far the CINC should press his point of view is not definable but is limited—more so than with demands made under his representative responsibility. Joint Pub 5-03.1 specifically tasks the supported commander with this advisory function in phases I-III and V of the crises action planning process. Finally, the CINC is required to serve in an *executive* function once his political leadership chooses a particular course of action. Phase VI of the crises action planning process assigns this responsibility. He must translate policy into military force even if the chosen course runs counter to his military judgment. A consistent impediment to ideal civil-military relations is the fact that these three responsibilities may occur concomitantly. CINCs do not abdicate their representative nor their advisory function when ordered to execute. A successful operational leader constantly tends to each and neglects none. It is under this representative, advisory, and executive triangle of responsibility that operational leaders of the past may be studied for lessons to improve the future.

TWO OPERATIONAL LEADERS JUXTAPOSED

“Commanders of combatant commands exercise combatant command (command authority) over assigned forces and are directly responsible to the NCA for the performance of assigned missions and the preparedness of their commands to perform assigned missions.”¹⁰

General MacArthur in the Korean Conflict. It is difficult to find any historical account of the Korean conflict without mention of the confrontation between General MacArthur and President Truman. Many conclude that MacArthur’s challenge of the tenet of civilian supremacy over the military forced Truman to recall him. This analysis is misleading. It is true that MacArthur strongly disagreed with Truman’s Korean policy. Specifically, restraints

⁹ Adapted from Huntington, 72. Professor Huntington focuses on the strategic level in his discussion of military responsibilities. His insight remains germane at the operational level.

¹⁰ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), Joint Pub 0-2 (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1995), I-7.

imposed in an attempt to prevent the conflict from escalating were not in synch with MacArthur's vision as to how best secure victory. It is further true that he expressly violated the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) message of 6 December 1950. This directive required that he and other commanders receive clearance from the Department of State prior to releasing statements to the press concerning foreign policy. MacArthur did not, however, disobey execution orders from the NCA nor did he challenge Truman's authority to issue them. Never did he embark on a military operation in direct defiance of political guidance. Clearly MacArthur disagreed with the policy path Truman was taking, but this disagreement did not cause his recall. Truman himself acknowledged this: "I was disturbed to find General MacArthur's view and mine so far apart. But of course it was always proper and appropriate for him to advance his opinion to his Commander in Chief. If he had gone no further than that, I would never have felt compelled to relieve him."¹¹ Simply put, MacArthur was guilty of military insubordination when he aired his disagreements publicly. There is no doubt that MacArthur would have disciplined any soldier beneath him—and rightly so—who would have been so bold as to criticize publicly the General's operational decisions, especially if that soldier was specifically ordered to restrain from airing disagreements. That MacArthur did not realize that his public statements were insubordinate was beneath his operational brilliance and sure to complicate Truman's plans.

In his historical account of the conflict, *Korea and the Fall of MacArthur*, Trumbull Higgins asserts "MacArthur's failure...resulted not from any of the many flaws in his arguments for extending the Korean war, but instead from his inability as a subordinate to win the Truman Administration over to his more or less absolute ends."¹² Higgins correctly concludes that MacArthur's failure was in his advisory function. His final analysis, however, misses the mark. History should not judge the operational leader on whether political leadership accepts his recommendations. His responsibility is to ensure that risks are fully appreciated. The politician then decides whether to accept these risks. This decision is based not only on advice from military leadership but on sources from the diplomatic, economic, and domestic political front as

¹¹ Harry S. Truman, quoted in Richard Lowitt, ed. The Truman–MacArthur Controversy (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1967), 32.

well. To judge success solely on whether the decision follows military advice is to discount the importance of all of the other shapers of the nature of war. MacArthur behaved as if he came to the same conclusion as Higgins. His feeling of failure when Truman did not follow his advice, coupled with his strong sense of self worth, drove him to insubordination.

Representative: MacArthur performed well in his representative function early in the conflict. The landing at Inchon serves as an example. The summer of 1950 found U.S. Forces desperately fighting to hold the narrow Pusan perimeter. MacArthur was fearful of a strategy that would pen these troops in “like beef cattle in a slaughterhouse.”¹³ He therefore recommended a bold amphibious landing near Inchon as an alternative to a costly frontal assault. Washington approved, by the end of August, OPERATION CHROMITE. Ultimately, the invasion was a dramatic success. MacArthur was less successful in fulfilling his representative responsibilities later in the war. He presented his argument to cross the 38th parallel as being representative of military exigency. He more properly should have recognized this position as being advisory in nature, as it was more concerned with policy options than with minimum military security requirements. The difference may seem subtle but defines the extent to which he was required to press his point of view.

Advisory: It was in his advisory role that MacArthur showed the least sophistication. It was here that the lack of an effective communication system, linking the General with the NCA, led to serious problems. MacArthur and Truman never met before the conflict and only once during it. Communication and coordination between the Joint Chiefs and the theater commander were equally as sporadic. The upshot of this amorphous C2 system was that MacArthur relieved himself of the responsibility to serve as a subordinate advisor. He came to suspect all political direction and adopted a Jomini-based belief that Generals solely bore the responsibility for ensuring victory. In the end, however, MacArthur’s greatest downfall was becoming too emotionally involved in his own strategic vision. This “pride in authorship” prevented him from

¹² Trumbull Higgins, Korea and the Fall of MacArthur (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 179-180.

¹³ Douglas MacArthur, quoted in Callum A. MacDonald, Korea: The War Before Vietnam (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 48.

realizing that the diplomatic front is as susceptible to vicissitudes as the military front and, thus, requires mid-course direction from political leadership.

Executive: MacArthur has been charged with expanding the Korean conflict beyond the limits Truman had envisioned. Specifically, he is often portrayed as single-handedly escalating the conflict north of the 38th parallel into North Korea. Actually, MacArthur began his northward offensive only after receiving authorization from a JCS directive. In fact, the theater commander took no major military action without the consent or, at least, the notification of Washington. At various times MacArthur requested permission to fly into Manchurian airspace, attack hydro-electric dams on the Yalu river, and blockade communist China.¹⁴ Each request was rejected, and each time MacArthur acquiesced. Civil-military relations were not strained by the General's actions, or lack thereof, taken in his executive capacity. They were strained by his public statements.

General MacArthur receives passing marks in his representative and executive responsibilities, but failed to satisfy his advisory function. Whether his actions prolonged the conflict or cost American lives is speculative. What is certain, however, is that his insubordination did not help the war effort, as it strained civil-military relations in an already complicated environment. Then Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall capsulized MacArthur's failings with respect to civil-military relations in his testimony before the Senate:

It is completely understandable and, in fact, at times commendable that a theater commander should become so wholly wrapped up in his own aims and responsibilities that some of the directives received by him from higher authority are not those that he would have written himself. There is nothing new about this sort of thing in our military history. What is new, and what brought about the necessity for General MacArthur's removal, is the wholly unprecedented situation of a local commander publicly expressing his displeasure at and his disagreement with the foreign and military policy of the United States.¹⁵

¹⁴ D. Clayton James, "Command Crisis: MacArthur and the Korean War," Lecture, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO: 12 November 1981.

¹⁵ George C. Marshall, quoted by James.

General Schwarzkopf in the Gulf War. No single legislative act altered the pattern of U.S. civil-military relations more than the Goldwater-Nichols Act. One result was to place “requisite authority” with the combatant commander. This ensures that the authority of theater commanders remain commensurate with their responsibilities. It also formalized the chain of command from the President directly to the CINC. Equally important was the redefinition of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) as the President’s principal military advisor. The Act also authorizes the President to require that all communications to and from a regional CINC pass through the Chairman; DOD Directive 5100.1 of September 1987 directs it. This reorganization does not lessen the CINC’s advisory function. Rather, it formalizes a conduit through which he conveys his advice. “The Chairman acts as the spokesman for the combatant commanders, especially on the operational requirements of their commands.”¹⁶ Although Goldwater-Nichols was the single most important event in codifying U.S. civil-military relations, a technological revolution in telecommunications allowed for its implementation. Major efforts to organize an efficient communications system have allowed for virtual presence between the war fighter and his political leadership. Given that “policy permeate[s] all military operations, and, in so far as [its] violent nature will admit, [has] a continuous influence on them,”¹⁷ this direct, real-time, link allows for more consistent translation of policy into military action.

Generals Schwarzkopf and Powell communicated at least daily via a most impressive secure phone system. In his memoir, Powell recalled: “It was a beautiful system. The President’s button was in the left-hand corner of the console and had a shrill, attention-demanding ring. Norm’s button was in the right-hand corner, and all I had to do was punch it and his phone rang in Riyadh, easy as talking to the guy in the office next door.”¹⁸ While Powell remained Schwarzkopf’s primary link to the NCA, he was not the only one. The General’s advisors during the crisis included officials from a host of different governmental agencies. The Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and Communications Agency all provided representatives in theater to assist in war planning as well

¹⁶ Joint Pub 0-2, II-5.

¹⁷ Clausewitz, 87.

as provide communication links back to Washington. Of particular note was the State Department's representative, Stanley Escudero. His influence was felt throughout Central Command and Schwarzkopf came to "rely on his advice completely."¹⁹ The impact this system had on civil-military relations during the conflict was tremendous, allowing Schwarzkopf to fulfill his representative, advisory, and execution responsibilities.

Representative: Schwarzkopf understood his representative role as the primary advocate for his command. At his 4 August 1990 Camp David presentation, he clearly laid out his estimation of the minimum troop strength required to protect Saudi Arabia, adding that it would take at least a month to get them in place. He concluded his remarks with an estimation of the troop strength and time required to support an offensive operation. Schwarzkopf felt that a total of 216,000 troops were required for the defensive mission. Although Powell countered that the American public would support no more than 150,000 troops, Schwarzkopf remained adamant. In the end, about 265,000 were sent to the area during DESERT SHIELD.²⁰

Advisory: On August 14 when Powell asked Schwarzkopf how he would kick Iraq out of Kuwait using troops already in place for DESERT SHIELD, he responded with: "What? I wouldn't. I couldn't. I've made it clear to everyone that we aren't sending enough troops to do that." When pressed, the CINC offered a plan that his staff had kicked around. He summarized his presentation with: "it would be crazy as hell and we'd probably end up losing the entire force."²¹ Fulfilling the advisory function often requires courage. When Saddam Hussein announced on August 19 that he would use westerners as "human shields" to protect military targets from allied air attacks, Powell asked Schwarzkopf what he was going to do. The CINC's response was that there was little he could do militarily. His intelligence was weak regarding their exact location, and his ability to extract them was severely limited. "We'll make every effort to find out where they are, but if we go to war and they're on essential targets, the

¹⁸ Colin Powell and Joseph E. Persico, My American Journey (New York: Random House, Inc., 1995), 483.

¹⁹ H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Peter Petre, It Doesn't Take a Hero (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 281.

²⁰ Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 65.

²¹ Schwarzkopf and Petre, 315.

President will have to make a very tough decision,”²² he reported to the Chairman. These two examples illustrate an operational leader defining the limitations of military power while respecting the requirement for political direction.

Executive: The United States retained a healthy pattern of civil-military relations before and during the Gulf War. This was largely due to Schwarzkopf and his understanding of the primacy of policy. His actions, however, were not without fault. Iraq’s primary offensive weapon, largely employed against Israel, became the SCUD missile. This should not have surprised anyone, given their liberal use during the “war of the cities” between Iraq and Iran. Schwarzkopf, however, seemed ill prepared to counter the missile and slow to react to the reality of its use. Whether his initial reluctance to devote a sizable force to counter this threat was due to Israel being outside of CENTCOM’s area of responsibility or an assessment of low military threat to friendly forces is not certain, but this inaction certainly agitated civil-military relations.²³ The usually stoic Secretary of Defense Cheney vented his frustrations only once during the Gulf War. When he was briefed on a relatively modest anti-Scud effort he responded with “I want some coverage out there. If I have to talk to Schwarzkopf, I’ll do it. As long as I am Secretary of Defense, the Defense Department will do as I tell them. The number one priority is to keep Israel out of the war.”²⁴ The untidy conclusion of the Gulf War also serves less as a model for future civil-military relations. CENTCOM’s mission was to destroy the Republican Guard. Not to render it combat ineffective, not to merely push it out of Kuwait, but to “cut its head off and kill it”.²⁵ That the war terminated with half of the Guard still intact reveals a termination strategy not in sync with the military situation. To be sure, Schwarzkopf does not bear full responsibility for this mix-up—the NCA must accept some of the blame—but, had the military end-state required to achieve policy been completely understood by all concerned, a more synchronized effort could have achieved a more peremptory coalition victory.

²² Ibid., 326.

²³ It is true that incredible amounts of air sorties were eventually launched to destroy the SCUD threat. Little evidence exists, however, that adequate forethought was devoted to possible political consequences should Iraq use her ballistic missile capability.

²⁴ Gordon and Trainor, 234.

²⁵ Colin Powell, quoted in Howard Means, Colin Powell (New York: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1992), 278.

In the aggregate, DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM may be considered a success in optimizing civil-military relations. A strong communication system and an operational leader sensitive to the primacy of policy allowed for nearly complete victory. General Schwarzkopf's actions in fulfilling the representative, advisory, and executive triangle of responsibility clearly facilitated this successful relationship.

RECOMMENDATIONS

*"The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be unreasonable, for policy has created the war; policy is the intelligent faculty, war only the instrument, and not the reverse. The subordination of the military point of view to the political is, therefore, the only thing which is possible."*²⁶

The Primacy of Policy: Cultivating an understanding of the importance and primacy of policy over military action is a continuous process. Formal education, most directly by way of war colleges, provides the foundation upon which practical experience may build. Attendance at one of these institutions should be considered a requirement for prospective operational leaders. Military leaders should then take advantage of every opportunity to convey this understanding to their charges. On the practical side, it is not enough to merely appreciate the importance of the primacy of policy. The stated and implied policy itself must be thoroughly understood. The Joint Operations Planning and Execution System provides a formal avenue to translate NCA decisions into combatant commander's operational plans. Paragraph one of the Commander's Estimate requires a restated mission statement. All too often, this paragraph simply replicates paragraph four of the CJCS's Warning Order. This may not be appropriate. A mission statement, reworded by the CINC and including perceptions of unstated tasks, allows the commander to inform the NCA how *he* envisions his responsibilities. The operational leader should also harness the power of informal communications. Real-time, personal, communications shorten the link between political and military leadership and may be required to cement understanding of the mission.

²⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, quoted in Huntington, 58.

Communications and the Chain of Command: Several options exist to ensure that communications remain unfettered throughout the chain of command. Tremendous advances in telecommunications technology should be exploited. Formal message traffic in the form of SITREPS provide important feedback to the NCA. The CINC must ensure that adequate emphasis is placed on timely and accurate messages. Communications not only provide the NCA with situation updates, they also enable an opportunity to provide mid-course direction. Informal channels of communication, as in a direct secure phone network, must also remain open. Finally, inter-agency liaison should be utilized as another link to policy makers. Dialogue between CINCs and corresponding regional Assistant Secretaries of State, Ambassadors, and other governmental agencies offer unique insight from a different perspective. The CINC's Political Advisor (usually a senior foreign service officer) coordinates inputs to and from individual country teams and the State Department, and may serve as a valuable link between military and civilian leadership.

Incremental Dividends: Nothing is as swift at causing friction in civil-military relations as successive failures or tactical stagnation on the battlefield. An operational plan allowing for the attainment of incremental dividends must be prepared. Again, technological advances assist. On-board video from both weapons platforms and weapons themselves provide near instantaneous feedback on mission success. Although this video usually depicts tactical, as opposed to operational, success, it may still be offered to civilian authorities and the American public as proof of effectiveness. To be sure, there are limitations to the use of tactical objectives as incremental dividends. The operational leader must divorce himself from the euphoria of these successes and realize that, unless they directly lead to achievement of operational objectives, their military value is bounded. He must be prepared to educate civilian leadership on the difference and prepare them for the possibility of less visible signs of operational success.

Rules of Engagement: One of the most important tools a nation has to foster effective civil-military relations lies in its rules of engagement (ROE). These must be clearly understood by all concerned. Unfortunately, ROE have traditionally been crafted by lawyers seemingly for

lawyers. Terminology has not always been user friendly for the typical soldier, sailor, and airman. The operational leader bears the responsibility of translating ROE into a usable format, understandable to his “lowest-level” warfighter. “The initial rules of engagement for my division in Desert Storm were published in a 12-page document. It seemed to me that they would be impossible to understand unless you were a Lieutenant Colonel with a law degree...So we put them on cards [and] made them simple.”²⁷ Frequent “what if” seminars should be held by all members of the warfighting team with subordinate commanders charged with providing feedback on clarity and appropriateness . Any possible conflicts between practice and policy maker intent should be reconciled swiftly. Effective ROE not only serves to restrain warriors from unnecessarily agitating the nature of a conflict, it also assists in communicating the state’s selected policy.

The Media: Unrefined procedures for dealing with the media frequently complicate civil-military relations. Unexpected or inappropriate public comments may quickly sabotage carefully thought-out strategies. An attentively constructed program, rife with forethought, should be in place before hostilities commence in order to ensure media relations augment, and not destroy, civil-military relations. Responsibility for press releases, whether originating from Washington, the theater of operations, or a combination thereof, should be clearly understood by the CINC.

Institutionalizing the Operational Leader’s Responsibilities: Relying on an operational leader to appreciate his impact on civil-military relations and act accordingly is to rely on the personality of individual leaders. More lasting is to institutionalize changes to the planning system. One such change should be in Appendix 3 to Annex A of the Joint Operation Planning and Executions System (Joint Pub 5-03.1). The supported commanders should be tasked, in line 3, with: “In COA development, consider civil-military relations while refining communication procedures to and from the NCA as well as procedures for releasing information to the media.”

²⁷ Barry R. McCaffrey, “Role of Armed Forces in the Protection of Human Rights,” Lecture. U.S. Army School of the Americas, Fort Benning, GA: 10 August 1994.

CONCLUSION

*"Operating policy consists of the immediate means taken to meet...security threat[s]. Institutional policy deals with the manner in which operating policy is formulated and executed. Civil-military relations is the principle institutional component of military security policy."*²⁸

The changing face of history has presented the United States with new challenges following her Cold War victory. Although no longer facing immediate military threats to national survival, she has continued to deploy forces in regional security and humanitarian crises at accelerated rates. In this new and still unsettled world, the United States has found herself engaged in conflicts with less intense war aims and more restrictive war efforts. There is no evidence to suggest a reverse in this trend. These types of conflicts, with requisite political restraints, tend to counter war's natural military tendency toward destruction. Significant strains in civil-military relations should be expected. It is with this background that all military leaders must recommit themselves to developing habits that will preserve a healthy pattern of civil-military relations. Toward this end, operational leaders do matter! The manner in which these key players elect to fulfill their representative, advisory, and executive function to the state, can have an enormous, even overriding, effect on our nation's ability to develop an effective pattern of civil-military relations. With that effective pattern in her arsenal, the United States will continue to maintain her status as the world's dominant power.

²⁸ Huntington, 1.

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